CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method of regulating electronic communications, said method comprising the steps of:

a) via a sender, purchasing a satisfaction bond to be coupled with a communication, said bond being adapted to be forfeited if a recipient of the communication to which the bond is coupled rejects the communication;

d) establishing said bond comprising:

e) via said sender, pledging or transferring a *res* in exchange for said bond; and

f) generating a block of secure data, said secure data comprising:

g) a secure certificate containing at least sender identity indicia;

h) a digital signature;

i) a hashing code; and

j) a hash of the message for which said bond is to accompany;

k) sending a message intended for a recipient accompanied by said bond;

l) prior to receipt of said message by the intended recipient, verifying the legitimacy of said bond via a third party;

m) subjecting said message to a filter when said bond is not determined to be legitimate or said message is not accompanied by a bond, said filter being adapted to accept or reject messages based upon predetermined criteria; and

n) not subjecting said message to a filter when said bond is determined to be legitimate.

2. A system of regulating electronic communications, said system comprising:

at least one message sender;

at least one message recipient;

a third party;

a mechanism for allowing a sender to purchase a satisfaction bond to be coupled with a communication, said bond being adapted to be forfeited if a recipient of the communication to which the bond is coupled rejects the communication;

a bond generator adapted to establish said bond, said bond generator comprising:

a *res* exchanger adapted to allow said sender to pledge or transfer a *res* in exchange for said bond; and

a secure block generator adapted to generate a block of secure data, said secure data comprising:

a secure certificate containing at least sender identity indicia;

a digital signature;

a hashing code; and

a hash of the message for which said bond is to accompany;

a message transmitter adapted to send a message intended for a recipient accompanied by said bond;

a bond legitimacy verifier adapted to, prior to receipt of said message by the intended recipient, verifying the legitimacy of said bond via said third party; and

a message filter adapted to filter said message when said bond is not determined to be legitimate or said message is not accompanied by a bond, said filter being adapted to accept or reject messages based upon predetermined criteria, and said message filter is adapted to forego filtering said message when said bond is determined to be legitimate.

3. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

associating a unique number with each said bond which identifies the sender.

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein elements e) through j) are carried out by a different entity from the sender.

5. The method of Claim 1, wherein element l) is carried out by determining whether the message is accompanied by a legitimate certificate.

6. The method of Claim 1, wherein element l) is carried out by determining whether the block of secure data has been altered.

7. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

upon receipt of a bonded message by said recipient, informing said recipient that the message is accompanied by a satisfaction bond; and

providing a recourse for the recipient if the recipient is unsatisfied with said message.

8. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

upon receipt of a bonded message by said recipient, informing said recipient that the message is accompanied by a satisfaction bond; and

providing a recourse for the recipient if the recipient is unsatisfied with said message, by referring the recipient to a hyperlinked Internet web site.

9. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

o) upon receipt of a bonded message by said recipient, informing said recipient that the message is accompanied by a satisfaction bond;

p) providing a recourse for the recipient if the recipient is unsatisfied with said message, by referring the recipient to a hyperlinked Internet web site;

q) upon the recipient connecting to said web site, informing the seller of the bond that said message is unsatisfactory; and

r) in response to element q), said seller penalizing said sender.

10. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

when said recipient deems said message unsatisfactory, informing said third party that said message is unsatisfactory.

11. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

when said recipient deems said message unsatisfactory, informing said third party that said message is unsatisfactory; and

said third party keeping a tally of unsatisfactory messages sent by identified senders.

12. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

when said recipient deems said message unsatisfactory, informing said third party that said message is unsatisfactory;

said third party keeping a tally of unsatisfactory messages sent by identified senders; and

said third party taking action against a sender when the number of unsatisfactory messages reaches a predetermined threshold.

13. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

said third party rejecting messages that contain a bond previously inserted into another message.

14. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

said third party rejecting messages that contain a bond that has been altered since being generated.

15. The system of Claim 2, wherein said bond generator is further adapted to associate a unique number with each said bond which identifies the sender.

16. The system of Claim 2, wherein said bond legitimacy verifier is further adapted to determine whether the block of secure data has been altered.

17. The system of Claim 2, further comprising:

said message transmitter is further adapted to, upon receipt of a bonded message by said recipient, inform said recipient that the message is accompanied by a satisfaction bond, and provide a recourse for the recipient

if the recipient is unsatisfied with said message, by referring the recipient to a hyperlinked Internet web site;

said web site being adapted to, upon the recipient connecting to it, inform the seller of the bond that said message is unsatisfactory; and

said seller being further adapted to penalize said sender in response.

18. The system of Claim 2, further comprising:

said recipient being further adapted to inform said third party of messages received that said recipient deems unsatisfactory;

said third party being further adapted to keep a tally of unsatisfactory messages sent by identified senders; and

said third party being further adapted to take action against a sender when the number of unsatisfactory messages reaches a predetermined threshold.

19. The system of Claim 2, further comprising:

said third party being further adapted to reject messages that contain a bond previously inserted into another message.

20. The system of Claim 2, further comprising:

said third party being further adapted to reject messages that contain a bond that has been altered since being generated.